

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 5017

FOR ARA/AND/V- SERGEANT

EO 11652 GDS
TAGS: PINS VE
SUBJ: TERRORISM - VENEZUELA

REF: A SERGEANT-CROWLEY TELCON 6/2/78, B 77 CARACAS A-174,
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1. THE GOV CATEGORICALLY CONDEMNS INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM,
WITHOUT EXCEPTION, AND HAS SUPPORTED EFFORTS AT THE UN AND OAS
TO GAIN INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CONDEMNATION OF TERRORISM FOR
POLITICAL PURPOSES. AT HOME, THE GOV STRESSES ITS
DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WHILE
ATTEMPTING TO SUPPRESS SMALL GROUPS OF ARMED INSURGENTS
IN EASTERN VENEZUELA. THESE INSURGENTS HAVE BEEN ABLE
TO DO LITTLE MORE THAN EMBARRASS THE GOV WITH ISOLATED
ACTS OF RURAL TERRORISM. HOWEVER, THE GOV HAS BEEN
UNABLE TO CRUSH THEM (AND, ON THE CONTRARY, CONTINUES
TO PUBLICLY DENY THEIR POLITICAL MOTIVATION), SO THAT
THE DOMESTIC INSURGENCY PROBLEM, WHILE POSING NO THREAT
TO EITHER THE NATIONAL OR REGIONAL GOVTS DOES
CONSTITUTE AN IRRITANT TO THE LOCAL INHABITANTS AND
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AN EMBARRASSMENT TO BOTH THE GOV AND THE VENEZUELAN
MILITARY.

2. SUGGESTED Q & A'S:

Q VARIOUS GROUPS HAVE DENOUNCED VENEZUELA'S HUMAN
RIGHTS TREATMENT OF TERRORISTS AS A FRAUD - CITING

THE POLICE KILLING OF A PROMINENT LEFTIST IN JULY 1976,
AS WELL AS OTHER ABUSES. HOW DOES THE RECORD SQUARE
WITH THE GOV'S CLAIM THAT IT RESPECTS HUMAN RIGHTS FOR
TERRORISTS?

A. THE GOV OF VENEZUELA'S RECORD ON RESPECT FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS IS GOOD. THE MOST SRIIOUS OFFENSE IN
RECENT TIMES WAS THE TORTURE OF A LEFTIST LEADER OF
THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE, JORGE RODRIGUEZ, WHICH RESULTED
IN HIS DEATH AT THE HANDS OF OFFICIALS OF THE INTERIOR
MINISTRY'S SECURITY SERVICE. THE SECURITY AGENTS WERE
TRIED AND FOUND GUILTY. BOTH PRESIDENT PEREZ AND INTERIOR
MINISTER LEPAGE CONDEMNED THIS CRIME IN THE STONGEST
POSSIBLE TERMS. WHILE INDIVIDUAL ABUSES MAY OCCUR, THE
GOV DOES NOT AS A MATTER OF POLICY SANCTION TORTURE OR
OTHER CRUEL, OR INHUMAN PUNISHMNET AGAINST EITHER COMMON
CRIMINALS OR THOSE ACCUSED OF OFFENSES AGAINST STATE
SECURITY.

Q. DOES THE KILLING OF RODRIGUEZ AND OTHER ABUSES AGAINST
INSURGENTS INDICATE THERE IS A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERECNE
BETWEEN VENEZUELA'S OFFICIAL POLICY TOWARD TERRORISM AND
ITS UNOFFICIAL ACTIONS AGAINTS TERRORISTS AND OTHER
POLITICAL DISSENTERS?

A. NO, THERE IS NO UNOFFICIAL POLICY WHICH CONDONES
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VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF BEHALF OF GOVERNMENTAL
AUTHORITIES. IN FACT, THE VENEZUELAN CONSTITUTION AND
LEGAL SYSTEM STIPULATE THAT ALL PERSONS CANNOT BE HELD
LONGER THAN EIGHTS DAYS WITHOUT CHARGES, AND THE
ACCUSED CAN APPEAL ANY VIOLATION OF THEIR RIGHTS TO
THE HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE GOV. THIS OFFICE UNDER-
TAKES INVESTIGATIONS TO ASCERTAIN THAT ALL STEPS ARE
FOLLOWED IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW.
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